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STATE FOR NEA/MAG (MHAYES), DRL (KMCGEENEY), AND S/WIC
(ARICCI)
PASS DOD/OSD (ALIOTTA)
PASS DOJ/ODAG (MSTRANSKY)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/15/2019
TAGS: PREL PHUM PTER KDRG TS
SUBJECT: ICRC SAYS A FORMER GUANTANAMO DETAINEE NEEDS
TREATMENT

REF: A. TUNIS 407
1B. TUNIS 399
1C. 08 TUNIS 1137
1D. 08 TUNIS 992
1E. 07 TUNIS 1483
1F. 07 TUNIS 1448
1G. 07 TUNIS 1425
1H. 07 TUNIS 1060

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and(d)

11. (S/NF) The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Tunisian Coordinator for Regional Protection Francesco Bruscoli (strictly protect) informed acting P/E Counselor July 14 on the margins of a reception that the ICRC had recently visited the two former Guantanamo detainees imprisoned in Tunisia. He said that Abdallah Ben Omar (al-Hajji) is still suffering psychologically, is not coherent, and needs treatment. He said Ben Omar was suffering from his cumulative experience over the last seven years (Refs C-H). He was not more precise about the treatment Ben Omar needs, and had no comments regarding Lufti Bin Swei Lagha.

12. (S/NF) Bruscoli asked about the status of the remaining 10 Tunisian Guantanamo detainees. Pol/Econ Chief mentioned that there had been news articles about USG discussions with Germany, Italy and others about possibly accepting Tunisian detainees. In that context, Bruscoli said the German Embassy was seeking assurances from the GOT regarding treatment of returnees but was not satisfied with the response so far.

13. (C) Regarding other ICRC work, he said they would soon begin a new project aimed at reducing the number of Tunisians going into the prison system. He said the necessary laws are already on the books but need to be implemented. They have GOT support for this project which will begin on a trial basis in one of the smaller provinces. The project will work to reduce the number of people in prison through both pre-sentencing measures including limiting pre-trial detention and sentencing measures that might provide more alternatives to prison sentences.

14. (S/NF) Comment: It is highly unusual for ICRC officials to be so frank regarding the former Guantanamo detainees and presumably indicates serious ICRC concern about Ben Omar's condition. We will seek a follow-up meeting with Francesco Bruscoli.

Godec